

Chapter 10



1939 – 1945



The Council for 1939

President	Dr John Cowan
Vice President	B. Walton
Vice President	H.L. Kenyon
Treasurer	W.J.E. Owen
Hon Secretary	F.W.D. Cross
Assistant Secretary	F.A. Gillies
Lune, Fishing Secretary	Dr John Cowan
Ribble, Fishing Secretary	Wilfred Barnes
Librarian and Literary Secretary	C. Thorp



World War 2

Wartime, December 1939

Owing to the war, a number of changes were made in the club. A few members tendered their resignations or became non-fishing members owing to other commitments. One of these was the Treasurer, W.J.E. Owen, his place being taken by Mr H. Kershaw. Another was the secretary, Mr F.W.D Cross, replaced by Mr J. Clifford Sutcliffe who was to be allowed a £5.5.0 for clerical expenses.

Membership rules were amended. A non fishing member serving with H.M. Forces may apply to the Fishing Secretary for a limited number of day tickets. Anglers could have three free tickets and at the Secretary's discretion, a further number could be paid for.

At a previous meeting Mr Anderson, who had been a Vice President in 1936 and 1938 told the Association that he was about to emigrate to Canada. He had been the Council's representative on the Ribble Conservancy Board so a Mr H.J. Parker's name was put forward to replace him.

The Treasurer reported to the Council meeting that there would be a bank overdraft of approximately £100 at the end of the season. In view of this together with a fall in subscriptions in the coming season due to resignations, economy was essential.

If possible the printing of Fishing tickets for the next season would be at a lower rate than that paid in previous seasons.

In the next season only 2000 fry would be purchased instead of the usual 6000.

It was suggested that the Association should consider the possibility of a reduction in the rates paid for the Horton Fishery. The view was also expressed that the cost of stationary and printing seemed high.

The Membership was 73.

- 35 fished the Ribble,
- 23 fished the Ribble and the Lune
- 1 fished the Lune only
- 7 were non-fishing members
- 5 were life members
- 2 were Honorary members.

There were 42 vacancies on the Ribble and 6 on the Lune.

There were 6 vacancies on the Lune and 15 on the waiting list.

Purchase of Fishing Rights on the River Ribble

At the Council meeting on 21st April 1939, a Company was formed to purchase fishing rights on the Ribble for the Manchester Anglers Association.
The following appointments were made:-

To be Directors of the Holding Company representing the Company,
C.L. Anderson W. Barnes H. Kershaw

To be Directors of the Holding Company representing the Association,
F.W.B. Cross J.F. Ingham

To be Secretary of the Holding Company,
C. Thorp

Although war had been declared at the beginning of the month, a meeting was held at Century House in Manchester on 26th September to discuss and formalise the Holding Company.

The Company had purchased five lengths of fishing rights on the Ribble. They were now offered to the Association to be paid for over a period of 40 years.

The five lengths are as follows:-

1. Length on the west side of Horton Bridge and some distance above Rowe End Pool and some distance down from J. Lambert. This from J. Lambert
2. Length east side three fields above Horton Beck down to the stile nearly opposite Crag Hill Farm and some distance up Horton Beck. From T. Lambert
3. Length east side, one field slightly lower down than the Golden Lion Inn. From V. Barnes
4. Length east side opposite Garden Plot above Horton Bridge and including considerable length of Bransghyll Beck. From W. Barnes
5. Length west side of the field below Helwith Bridge to the Quarry boundary. From W. Barnes

In view of the necessary formation costs incurred by the Company amounting to some £75, (privately defrayed) and that some yearly expenses must be provided for maintaining the Company, it was submitted that whereas the present rental on the five lengths amount to £17.14.0, a yearly rental of £22.14.0 (over 40 years), be asked from the Association.

It was pointed out also that the customary 10 year leases with consequent legal charges would not recur thus effecting a considerable saving to the Association on these particular conveyances.

The President, Dr Cowan, owing to special duties in consequence of war conditions was unable to be present at the meeting.

In view of the absence of Mr J.F. Ingham (appointed Director), now serving with H.M. Forces, Mr J.J. Ingham kindly signified his willingness to take his son's position as Director of the Holdings Company and was duly elected to this office.

At the next Council meeting Mr H.L. Kenyon (Vice President of the Association) and Mr J.J. Ingham (Director of the Holding Company) were appointed as two trustees on behalf of the Association.

The Council were informed that an option had been taken out by the Holdings Company on the short length above Helwith Bridge from The bridge to the wind mill on the west side. The owners (Helwith Bridge Stone and Granite Company) granted this option to the Holdings Company to be exercised in case the licence of the Inn was not renewed at some future date.

Under present conditions, visitors to the Inn can also obtain a permit to fish this length.

Harry Kershaw

Harry Kershaw joined the Manchester Anglers in 1928 when he was already an accomplished angler. He was elected to the Council in 1934/5. In 1935/36 he became Senior Vice-President and the next year became President of the society. After this he was a member of the Council until 1940 when he became an “ex-officio” member when elected as Treasurer of the Society. At this time he was deeply involved with the purchase of fishing rights for the club, which were held in a Holding Company.

On the death of Clifford Thorpe in 1942, Harry took over the Club’s Library as Librarian and stored the books in his house in Kersal in North Manchester. The Library had been increased considerably a few years before by a bequest of over a hundred books in the will of Samuel Swire a shipping owner. Harry’s wife Gertrude was always complaining about the books, but in truth they represented only a small percentage of the many mementoes that filled Harry’s house. At least they were safer from the bombing.

In 1949 Harry moved into a large house in Fallowfield in south Manchester. He continued as Treasurer until early 1954 when he died. He was replaced by Gerry Walker, a bank manager who also took over the position as Secretary of the club on the retirement of Cliff Sutcliffe. My “Uncle” Cliff had been Secretary since the beginning of the war in 1940.



Harry Kershaw at the Tarn

“I first met Harry in 1941 at “Billy Garth” a Guest House run by the river keeper Walter Pollard. Several anglers and their wives would stay at Billy Garth where it was like a house party with excellent catering. Most anglers were in awe of Harry’s angling skills and it was a pleasure to see him in action both on the river and the Tarn. I used to “ghilly” for him when he would show me his favourite places where experience taught him that the fish were lying. More especially, in the late forties as his health and heart problems increased, I would row him round the Tarn as we sought out fish and he told stories.

Harry had no children. He once said that he and his wife had decided to have no “Cannon Fodder” after seeing the terrors of the First World War. At Billy Garth we would always sit near each other for meals when Harry would show me naughty tricks such as spinning a serviette ring backwards after propelling it forward. The windows often steamed up and he would draw wonderful pictures in the condensation. His wife would say “Oh! Harry” as he taught me these tricks! He was quite irascible and with a twinkle in his eye he would hand roll yet another cigarette while he let things calm down. Although he was a fly fisherman usually fishing three flies on the river, never more than about six inches deep, he would also take up the challenge when the river was in flood. I remember one time we dug up a few worms from near the cesspool behind Billy Garth and went worm fishing just down the road on the side of the Garden Pool just above The Crown. He obviously knew what he was doing; his plan was to fish fairly thick and strike the fish and lift it out of the water in one action. Unfortunately he had not taken into account the trees behind and we finished up with the line caught high up in a tree with a fish dangling from the end, out of reach. We always had a lot of fun. For several years I was a frequent visitor to his house in Fallowfield, as he was to my parents house. I can still remember several of his stories and have written about them elsewhere.

Harry worked for the Manchester Guardian in C. P. Scott’s time and later for the Scott Trust. He had many connections inside and outside fishing. One was Laurie Hardy of Alnwick with whom he used to go fishing. Before he died Harry gave me a watercolour painting of a fisherman from 1926 which is reproduced here. Harry told me that this was the basis for the Hardy Trademark. When he died, amongst other things, I was left his twenty bore shot gun and his fishing rod. The latter I had always admired for its thin top and casting power. Unfortunately some years later I broke it at a joint while landing a big fish. I still sometimes sit in Harry’s armchair that has “cupboards” in both of the arms and when I do, I remember him treating me “as the son he never had”.

From David Marsden’s “Thoughts on Fishing in Horton” 2005



Harry netting a fish at the Tarn



Picture painted by Harry Kershaw in 1926 for Hardy Bros, the fishing tackle company.

Manchester Anglers' Association AGM March 1940

Trout Fishermen Sit Down to — Fried Whiting



Left to right,
Mr B Walton (President elect), Dr John Conran (retiring President), Mr F.A. Gillies (a former secretary),
Mr C. Thorp (hon. Librarian) and Mr W. Barnes (Fishing Secretary)

“Before they lunched in Manchester today these officials of the Manchester Anglers’ Association, which owns some of the finest waters in the north discussed the prospects for the season.

While some of the nicest and fattest trout in England are swimming up the Ribble and their owners, members of the Manchester Anglers’ Association met at lunch today to eat Whiting.

Some of the trout have three days to live for the fishing season opens on March 15th. Today when the fishermen lunched at a Manchester Hotel, Filet Merlan Frit with Sauce tartare was on the menu. In ordinary English it was fried fillet of Whiting. Instead of meat the Anglers had Didonneau Roti — roast turkey — with chipolatas. Soon they will be catching Salmon and Sea Trout on the river Lune near Kirby Lonsdale. They will be after Grayling too.

Some of the trout they will catch in the Ribble will have been bred at the Association’s Hatcheries in Horton near Settle, where the fish are reared from fry to two-year olds before being put in the river.

Not Enough For All

An official of the Association said today : “We did not ask for a special menu for the Luncheon, nor are we going to try to popularise fresh water fish for the table. So far as I am concerned there are only a few fresh water fish worth eating — trout, pike, perch, grayling, salmon and sea trout. If there was a movement to popularise fresh water fish for eating there would not be enough to go round. We own 10 miles of water in the upper Ribble and 5 miles of the Lune, but we need to restock the waters from our hatcheries. A lot of people sneer at perch but providing that it is properly cooked and is taken from good sparkling water, it eats well. For fresh water fish to rival sea fish on the menus however, we shall have to double the inland fishing waters. Fishermen are increasing every year, but fishing waters are static”.

Fishing Rights and Leases on the River Ribble

At the September 1941 Council Meeting the Ribble Fishing Secretary, Mr Barnes, explained that three leases for fishing lengths were up for renewal.

These were

1. Wood's Length.
Amendments, 2 rods instead of 1 and the Association to be responsible for damage to walls, fences, etc.
2. Deighton's length
Monetary payments to be increased from 30/- to £3 per annum.
3. Fawcett's length.

There is no mention in the Council minutes as to whether or not these leases were approved.

Shares, Stocks and Securities in the Holding Company.

J.C. Sutcliffe, H. Henshaw and O.E.O. Jackson were appointed as Trustees.

Fishing Leases on the River Lune

At the Council meeting in February the members were told of the death of Keeper Bracken. Over the years little had been noted in the minutes other than numbers of anglers fishing the Lune.

In March 1910, Manchester Anglers were first able to fish for Salmon and Sea Trout on about 4 miles of the River Lune between Low Gill and Sedburgh. It was thought that "by widening the area and increasing the variety of its sporting waters it was hoped that the membership would show signs of a healthy and progressive increase"

The report on fishing the Lune in 1918 showed that "The water retains its popularity with the members and has been freely used by them. The accommodation in the district is unfortunately very limited and the members are indebted to the good offices of the keeper and his wife for the comfort and excellent entertainment provided for them under the trying conditions of the last year".

The record of the 1918 season was as follows;

Brown Trout	395	heaviest fish	11lb 2oz
Sea Trout	30	heaviest fish	3lbs
Salmon	3	heaviest fish	13lbs

In the same season 1789 fish were caught on the Ribble and 140 on the Tarn

In September 1941 the Council Meeting was advised that there were problems with 2 of the Lune Leases.

- 1 Underley Estate length. The length leased from the owners had diminished but there had been no reduction of rent
- 2 Drybeck length leased from Mr Nelson. £10 to be offered and no other amount, lease to be discontinued if he does not agree.

The Tarn

In 1941 a new boat was purchased for the Tarn. It was paid for with donations from members.

Membership in 1942

The numbers of Association Anglers in 1942 showed that the membership continued to fluctuate with the problems of wartime.

Ribble	37	Honorary	2
Ribble and Lune	22	Life	4
Lune only	1	Non fishing	9
Total 75 anglers			

Later in 1942 the numbers of Anglers had dropped to 72. Numbers then rose so that in 1943 there was a waiting list of 14. Persons on the waiting list were charged £1.1.0 and received 3 day tickets per season while on the list.. By February 1944 there were 5 names on the list and 80 members.

By November 1944 the spread of anglers' fishing interests were roughly back to the usual level,

Ribble (inc 4 junior members)	42	Honorary	2
Ribble and Lune	23	Life	4
		Non fishing	9
Total 780 anglers			

Purchase of Fishing Rights on the River Ribble

The Manchester Anglers' Association had purchased a further length of fishing from R. Davies Esq. H. Burgess, W. Barnes and B. Walton were thanked for their magnificent efforts expended in the acquisition of the centrally placed 'key' length. They were each reimbursed £8.8.0 for expenses on behalf of the Association as distinct from the Holding Company.

The Association was bequeathed a legacy, free of duty by Mr J.W. Sutcliffe, a recently deceased member of the M.A.A. Council .

The Holding consisted of £25 shares of which £3 per share had been paid up.

Newhouses Tarn Management

At the December 1943 Council meeting, the Treasurer, Mr Kershaw read his report on "The Progress, Achievements and Failures of the Association's Fishery at Newhouses Tarn".

This provoked a lively discussion on future policy with regard to weed control, restocking and general management.

Restocking

In 1944, 1000 yearling trout at a cost of £33 were bought from the Trent Fish Farm. In previous years the trout had come from Howietoun Fisheries in Scotland.

600 of the fish were to go to Mr Foster Knowles under the agreement with him in lieu of rent for 1943 and 1944. The remaining 400 were put into the hatching ponds after 187 two to three year-old trout were transferred from the ponds to the river between New Inn bridge and Crag Hill.

The total cost was £28.12.8 plus sundries of £1.14.9 i.e. a total of £30.7.5 which included 56lbs of food.

Manchester Anglers' Association AGM March 1944

The AGM was held at The Grand Hotel, Manchester, Tuesday March 28th following a Luncheon at 1 pm.

In his speech Mr Burgess, acting as President for Dr Sutherland, handed out copies of the poem 'Hill Tarn' which had been written by Harry Kershaw, a member of the Council.

Hill Tarn

By H Kershaw

I paused and gazed ere stepping from the stile,
The little lake lay cradled in the hill.
Whilst down below the hidden river ran,
To eastward rose, austere the lonely fell.
To west and north, across and up the dale
More lofty giants frowned in grim disdain,
One wore a misty nimbus round his head,
Mock sanctity the witless to deceive.
Far back along the lately travelled way,
Beyond the place where sweats the quarry's crew
Who blast and bake the bowels of the hill,
Fouling the face of nature with their reek,
There stood to southward, softened by the haze
A row of ragged teeth athwart the sky,
Some fossiled ogre's monstrous jaw upthrust
In gaping wonder as to how or why.

About this little lake the hills enfold
Afar and near, above me in the blue
The fowl, a-wing, pipe querulous protest,
That I should thus their privacy invade.
The scolding plover tumbling through the air,
A snipe, soft drumming with each powered dive,
The curlew flutes his clamorous rebuke
An old red cock called out "Go-back,Go-back".

And though removed from gaze of living men,
I seem to feel the power of unseen eyes
Voices there were of shades, inaudible,
Whose erstwhile owners knew this place of old.
Some jeered derision of my dainty wand,
Spectres of oafs who'd blundered heedless by.
Others apprised and haply, envied too,
Revisiting the scene of past delights.
For who'd refrain, had he once known the joy
Of trembling bended rod and steel-armed fly,
From haunting such a place where he had wont
In earthly guise, tools of like kind to ply.

A pagan in his paradise, I feel
Akin the woad stained hunter as he steals
With barbed flint, thong bound to hazel shaft,
To spear his cunning, lurking prey. Who knows?
Perchance 'twere he whose blood within me flows.

And what, my friends, despite Prelate or Pope
Could I, a Pagan deep at heart desire
Than liberty to sojourn where, at will,
I, during life, had spent such golden hours?
Fain would I "ghost" some future hopeful wight
As he moves cannily along the quiet stream
Experiencing again that ageless glow
Which surely the elect alone may know.

The skilful cast, the dimpling rise, the stroke,
The lusty plunging fight, the singing reel,
And, yes, the guilty glee of final rite,
The eight within the softly creaking creel.
Or yet again, the curse, as cast held high
Within the grasping hand of outstretched bough.
Or, when through feckless act the gut-point parts
To chuckle, as with utterance dire and fell,
The hapless vendor is consigned to ruddiest hell.
On all these things I muse while seated quiet
Above the lake there cradled in the hill.

And as upon my journey down the dale
Held in the meshes of enchantment still,
I mutely wonder what the fates can give
To take the place of this, that here I love.
But all such brooding thoughts are put to flight,
The hospitable threshold now is crossed,
The laughing gibes of jolly friends resound,
The day's adventures listened to and told.
And as I strip my gear – oh effort vile;
That humid fumbling struggle, hardly won,
a whisper in my ear – seduction's lure
"Now 'K' what'll you drink old man?"

Anon, amid life's humdrum daily round,
As bent above the task that claims my days,
A mirage grows, my truant eye to fill –
The little lake there cradled in the hill.

Newhouses Tarn Report

Following the December 1943 Council meeting when the Treasurer, Mr Kershaw, read his report on the Tarn, he and Mr O.E.O. Jackson had carried out a survey.

They came to the conclusion that the outlet by the Duck wall could be deepened and improved at an approximate cost of £20, so that the Tarn fish could drop down the stream, deposit ova which could probably hatch and help to stock the Tarn.

The Council discussed this proposal. Mr Sutcliffe pointed out that even if the fish did not drop down and shed their ova, at the appropriate season if suitably gravelled, the stream could be sewn with eyed ova at the low cost of 25/- per 1000 . Alevins would make their way up to the Tarn in due course, and while some might be devoured by the larger fish, the fact that a small shoal of minnows had been seen by the boat house in 1944 proved that small fish could survive successfully amongst the 3 and 4 pounders, the weeds probably giving enough shelter.

The Council agreed to the scheme for post-war consideration, Mr Kershaw being asked to undertake to do a scale plan and a list of required materials.

Restocking

Buying fish from the Trent Fisheries must have been successful as in 1945, 1500 yearling trout were again sourced from them.

300 of the fish were to go to Mr Foster Knowles.

1100 were to go directly to the river 150 directly to the Tarn and 250 to the stock ponds for growing on and for subsequently for release in the Tarn

Purchase of Fishing Rights on the River Ribble

The length of fishing attached to Studfold House and Farm was included in the intended sale of the property to be held on February 6th 1945. Mr Barnes intended to be at the sale and to negotiate to purchase or lease the length.

A draft letter was sent to Miss Hammond, the owner, in respect of the purchase of her fishing rights.

Manchester Anglers' Association 66th AGM March 1945

Mr W. Barnes spoke for his son, the retiring President, Mr J. Barnes, who was unable to attend the A.G.M. owing to Military duties.

In his Introductory speech the new President, Mr J.C. Sutcliffe, said that he hoped that eventually when conditions were more stable the Association would hold social gatherings wherever possible. He spoke of the work to be done after hostilities ceased, the repairs to weirs and the works at the Tarn which would soon absorb the cash balance in hand, the apparent 'good' financial position being in the nature of a paper position.

It had already been decided to put the entrance fee up to £6.6.0.